



SUB-COMMITTEE ON
RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH
AND RESCUE

4th session
Agenda item 8

COMSAR 4/8/9
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**MATTERS CONCERNING SEARCH AND RESCUE INCLUDING
THOSE RELATED TO THE 1979 SAR CONFERENCE AND
THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GMDSS**

**Indian Ocean Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR)
and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)**

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides information on the report of the above Conference and invites the Sub-Committee to take action.
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 10
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 70/23, COMSAR 4/INF.5

1 As reported to the Committee at its seventieth session (MSC 70/23, paragraph 7.13), a SAR/GMDSS Conference was convened in Fremantle (Australia) with the co-operation of the Government of Australia and with financial support from the Governments of Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, the International Mobile Satellite Organization (Inmarsat) and the International Transport Workers' Federation.

2 The Conference was held from 21 to 25 September 1998 and was attended by representatives from 20 countries.

3 The purpose of the Conference was to enable representatives of countries in the region to consider:

- .1 developing one provisional integrated SAR plan for the entire Indian Ocean, thus maximizing co-ordination and cost efficiency for SAR operations;
- .2 providing coverage for areas in the Indian Ocean identified as lacking the necessary arrangements for SAR purposes;

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- .3 the adequacy of GMDSS shore-based facilities on both sides of the Indian Ocean and on the island States; and
- .4 training needs for SAR and the GMDSS and any other relevant issues.

4 The Conference noted that the sole purpose of the delimitation of search and rescue regions (SRRs) undertaken by the Conference was for ensuring and, where necessary, improving the provision of SAR services in the Indian Ocean and that such delimitation was in the context of paragraph 2.1.7 of the annex to the 1979 SAR Convention; was subject to such alterations as may be deemed necessary following bilateral agreements between neighbouring States; and did not prevent any delegation from registering reservations on specific parts thereof.

5 The Conference, in adopting a SAR plan for the region, noted that the plan would continue to be considered as "provisional" until relevant agreements have been established by Parties to the 1979 SAR Convention and the Secretary-General of IMO has been notified by the Governments concerned, in accordance with paragraph 2.1.4 of the 1979 SAR Convention.

6 The Conference, noting that maritime SAR services are inadequate in some areas of the world, particularly in developing countries, owing to lack of sufficient funds, and the need to ensure a minimum global coverage of communication and SAR co-ordination facilities before 1 February 1999, endorsed a proposal submitted by the Australian delegation supported by other delegations on the establishment of an international SAR Fund (resolution No. 5).

7 The Conference noted with deep satisfaction that, with the successful conclusion of its work, the provisional global SAR plan had been completed and greeted this as a most significant achievement in IMO's efforts to enhance safety at sea and as a very appropriate and fitting development to mark the events of 1998 as the Year of the Ocean (Resolution No.6).

8 The Conference adopted resolutions on:

- .1 Adoption of the provisional maritime search and rescue (SAR) plan for the Pacific Ocean and acceptance and implementation of the International Convention on Maritime SAR, 1979 (Resolution No. 1);
- .2 Arrangements for the provision and co-ordination of maritime search and rescue (SAR) services and co-operation between States (Resolution No. 2);
- .3 Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) (Resolution No. 3);
- .4 Technical co-operation for maritime search and rescue and radiocommunication facilities (Resolution No. 4);
- .5 Establishment of an international SAR Fund (Resolution No. 5);
- .6 Completion of the Provisional Global SAR Plan (Resolution No. 6); and
- .7 Expressions of appreciation (Resolution No. 7).

9 Full texts of resolutions No. 3 and 5 are given in annexes 1 and 2 respectively, and that of resolutions No. 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 are given in annex to document COMSAR 4/INF.5.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

10 The Sub-Committee is invited to note the above information and, taking into account any decisions of MSC 70 and MSC 71, to take action with regard to Conference Resolutions Nos. 3 and 5 as follows:

- .1 with regard to Resolution No. 3 (annex 1) to:
 - .1 consider how to develop a single registration database for GMDSS equipment users which rescue co-ordination centres may readily access to support search and rescue operations;
 - .2 consider further appropriate measures to eliminate false alerts;
 - .3 encourage States operating MRCCs associated with Inmarsat coast earth stations to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to relay Inmarsat distress alerts to all responsible MRCCs within the service area of the respective coast earth stations;
 - .4 encourage States operating MRCCs to establish means of direct communication between all MRCCs in the region/area;
 - .5 invite Inmarsat to help to ensure that all responsible MRCCs with associated search and rescue regions have the specific information they may need to contact ships and other craft via Inmarsat;
 - .6 recommend that providers of GMDSS services develop the capacity to distribute alert data as directly as practicable to responsible RCCs and to decode alert messages prior to delivery to the search and rescue system when this can be done without introducing delays in the delivery of the alert; and
 - .7 urge all users to ensure that their GMDSS equipment is at all times correctly coded and its identities are properly registered in a recognized national or international SAR database.
- .2 with regard to Resolution No. 5 (annex 2) to:
 - .1 consider establishing an International SAR Fund for the purposes of:
 - .1 establishing and maintaining worldwide an adequate number of operational RCCs to cover the needs of international shipping;
 - .2 establishing and maintaining an efficient global communications network for the dissemination of distress alert data and SAR co-ordination communications;
 - .3 establishing and maintaining databases for the operational support of GMDSS, if this is not done on a national basis; and
 - .4 supporting the provision of other necessary resources for the effective implementation of the SAR Plan.

ANNEX 1

Resolution No. 3

GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS)

The 1998 Fremantle Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS),

RECALLING Resolution 6 of the International Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, which invited the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to develop a global maritime distress and safety system that would include telecommunication provisions for the effective operation of the search and rescue plan prescribed by the Annex to the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979,

NOTING that IMO has developed a global maritime distress and safety system, by means of amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, which entered into force on 1 February 1992 and uses Inmarsat and COSPAS-SARSAT satellite systems as well as digital selective calling, direct-printing and radiotelephone on terrestrial MF and HF frequencies for distress and safety purposes including those for search and rescue,

NOTING FURTHER that the World Administrative Radio Conference for Mobile Telecommunications, 1987, adopted amendments to the Radio Regulations and that the Conference of Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, in 1988 adopted amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention to introduce the global maritime distress and safety system,

BEING CONCERNED over the high number of false distress alert incidents which undermine the credibility of the GMDSS and unnecessarily overstress the SAR organizations,

CONSIDERING the need for shore-based facilities to introduce the system in the Indian Ocean region,

CONSIDERING ALSO IMO Assembly resolution A.814(19) - Guidelines, for the avoidance of false alerts,

1. URGES all coastal States in the Indian Ocean region to take account of the GMDSS in any national plans to improve maritime radiocommunications or their SAR organization and to communicate details of such plans to IMO;
2. INVITES the Maritime Safety Committee of IMO to:
 - (a) consider how to develop a single registration database for GMDSS equipment users which rescue co-ordination centres may readily access to support search and rescue operations;
 - (b) consider further appropriate measures to eliminate false distress alerts;
 - (c) encourage States operating MRCCs associated with Inmarsat coast earth stations to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to relay Inmarsat distress alerts to all responsible MRCCs within the service area of the respective coast earth stations;
 - (d) encourage States operating MRCCs to establish means of direct communication between all MRCCs in the region/area;

- (e) invite Inmarsat to help to ensure that all responsible MRCCs with associated search and rescue regions have the specific information they may need to contact ships and other craft via Inmarsat;
- (f) recommend that providers of GMDSS services develop the capacity to distribute alert data as directly as practicable to responsible RCCs and to decode alert messages prior to delivery to the search and rescue system when this can be done without introducing delays in delivery of the alert; and
- (g) urge all users to ensure that their GMDSS equipment is at all times correctly coded and its identities are properly registered in a recognized national or international SAR database.

3. ALSO INVITES the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization to bring this resolution to the attention of all coastal States in the Indian Ocean region.

ANNEX 2**Resolution No.5****ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL SAR FUND**

The Conference,

RECOGNIZING that maritime search and rescue services are inadequate in some areas of the world, in particular in developing countries owing to lack of sufficient funds,

NOTING WITH CONCERN that until now only 59 Governments have accepted the 1979 Maritime SAR Convention,

NOTING that steps need to be taken without delay to ensure even the minimum global coverage of communication and SAR co-ordination facilities,

BEING CONCERNED that the technical problems and inadequacies identified by the Conference may not be solved by the full implementation of the GMDSS on 1 February 1999,

1. INVITES IMO, in co-operation with the aviation and maritime communities and for the purpose of assisting countries, in particular developing countries, to fulfil their obligations under the SAR and SOLAS Conventions, to consider establishing an International SAR Fund for the purposes of:

- (a) establishing and maintaining worldwide an adequate number of operational RCCs to cover the needs of international shipping;
- (b) establishing and maintaining an efficient global communications network for the dissemination of distress alert data and SAR co-ordination communications;
- (c) establishing and maintaining databases for the operational support of GMDSS, if this is not done on a national basis; and
- (d) supporting the provision of other necessary resources for the effective implementation of the SAR Plan;

2. INVITES the Maritime Safety Committee and the Technical Co-operation Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to consider taking appropriate action to facilitate the establishment of the International SAR Fund referred to above;

3. INVITES the Secretary-General of IMO to make available his good offices for the achievement of the above objectives and administration of the Fund;

4. INVITES FURTHER the Secretary-General of IMO to bring this resolution to the attention of the Secretary-General of ICAO for information and action as appropriate.
